

Holiday Fire Safety

Make this holiday season a happy time to remember by practicing these safety habits.

1

Christmas Trees

- ☐ **Artificial Trees** -- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." Although this label does not mean the tree won't catch fire, it does indicate the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly.
- ☐ **Selecting a Live Tree** -- Needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches, and the needle should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. The trunk should be sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree on the ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long, has probably dried out, and is a fire hazard.
- ☐ **Caring for your tree** -- Do not place the tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace or heat vent. The heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks. Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree. Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.
- ☐ **Disposing of the tree** -- Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or wood burning stove. When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly. The best way to dispose of your tree is by taking it to a recycling center or having it hauled away by a community pick-up service.

2

Decorations

- ☐ Follow the manufacturer's instruction on how to use tree lights. Any string lights with worn, frayed or broken cords or loose bulb connections should not be used. Never use electric lights on a metal tree.
- ☐ Unplug Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to sleep.
- ☐ Never use lit candles to decorate a tree.
- ☐ Avoid using lit candles to decorate a room. If you do use them, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked over. Never leave a burning candle unattended.
- ☐ All holiday decorations should be nonflammable or flame-retardant and place away from heat vents.
- ☐ Never put wrapping paper in a fireplace, it can throw off dangerous sparks and produce chemical buildup in the home that could cause an explosion.

3

Cooking

- ☐ Have a fire extinguisher available not more than 10 feet from the stove, on the exit side of the room.
- ☐ Know how to use your fire extinguisher. A 2 ½ lb class ABC multi-purpose dry chemical extinguisher is recommended.
- ☐ Start holiday cooking with a clean stove and oven.
- ☐ Keep the kitchen off-limits to young children and adults that are not helping with food preparations to lessen the possibility of kitchen mishaps.
- ☐ When cooking, do not wear clothing with loose sleeves or dangling jewelry. The clothing can catch on fire and jewelry can catch on pot handles, causing spills and burns.
- ☐ Cook on the back burners when possible. Turn pot handles in so they don't extend over the edge of the stove.
- ☐ Never leave cooking unattended. If you must leave the kitchen while cooking, turn off the stove or have someone watch what is being cooked.

4

Guests

- ☐ Keep your family and overnight guests safe with a working smoke alarm on every level of your home, in every bedroom, and in the halls adjacent to the bedrooms. Test smoke alarms monthly and replace batteries at least twice a year.
- ☐ If you are having young children in your home, do a safety check of your home. Are matches and lighters out of sight and out of reach? Are medicines and cleaners out of reach? Do your outlets have covers? Do a thorough check of each room the children will occupy.
- ☐ If smoking is allowed inside, provide guests with large, deep ashtrays and check them frequently.
- ☐ Overnight guests should be instructed on the fire escape plan and designated meeting place for your home.
- ☐ Before guests leave, be sure that guests and children are buckled up properly in vehicles. Ensure that designated drivers have not been drinking. Impaired driving is a concern for every person who travels by car.